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CHANGE YOUR CLOCK, CHANGE YOUR BATTERIES

(ANCHORAGE, Alaska) – Alaska State Fire Marshal David Tyler is reminding Alaskans to check the batteries in their smoke and CO (carbon monoxide) alarms when they change their clock for Daylight Savings Time this Sunday. Tyler also reminds the public of a program that is available free-of-charge through the Alaska Division of Fire and Life Safety. Alaskans can go to the Alaska Division of Fire and Life Safety’s web site at burny.alaska.gov and click on a “*smoke alarm reminder*” link. On this site, you can sign up for a free monthly e-mail reminder to check smoke alarms.

Many homes have smoke and CO alarms with batteries that should be replaced at least twice annually. Daylight Savings Time can serve as a reminder to check smoke and CO alarms and change the batteries. With the development of long-life lithium battery powered alarms, the batteries have a life span of up to 10 years, so you may not need to replace this type of battery as often. The National Fire Protection Association suggests that 90% of American homes are equipped with smoke alarms but over 50% of them are not in working condition.

“The key is to take a few minutes to check, test and clean your smoke and CO alarms to make sure they are functioning properly, and what better time to do this than when you change your clock for Daylight Savings Time,” Tyler said.

It is important to remember that manufacturer’s guidelines for smoke and CO alarm installation, testing, cleaning, and replacing batteries should be followed. However, general recommendations are as follows:

- Install smoke alarms in your home if you do not currently have them. An alarm located between the sleeping area and the living area offers a minimum amount of protection. For maximum protection, install an alarm in every room, on every level of your home.
- Install at least one CO alarm on each level of your home
- Smoke and CO alarms lose sensitivity over time and should be replaced. The approximate lifespan of an alarm is 7 to 10 years.
- At least once a month, press the test button to check your alarm. If the alarm doesn’t sound, replace the batteries. If this doesn’t solve the problem, replace the unit. Keep in mind that batteries should be changed at least twice a year. Start this practice to coincide with Daylight Savings Time.
- Periodically clean smoke and CO alarms using a vacuum attachment. This removes particles that could interfere with the alarm’s proper operation.
- When a “chirping” sound is noted, this is a sign that the batteries are weak and should be replaced.

